**Subject: Annual Report of the Committee on Information Services**

Date: March 10, 2010

From: Doug Shook and Julie Tilson, CIS co-chairs

**Members:**

Janis Brown, Health Science Libraries

Patricia Dean, Annenberg School of Communications

Leyla Ezdinli,\* Information Technology Services

Christopher Gould, College of Letters Arts and Sciences

Ellis Horowitz, Viterbi School of Engineering

Sarah Ingersoll, Keck School of Medicine

Maryalice Jordan-Marsh, School of Social Work

Russ Kaurloto,\* Information Technology Services

Robert Lau,\* Information Technology Services

Marcus Levitt, College of Letters Arts and Sciences

Steve Lund, College of Letters Arts and Sciences

Susan Metros,\* Information Technology Services

Richard Nelson,\* Information Sciences Institute

Ilee Rhimes,\* Information Technology Services

Rick Schmunk, Thornton School of Music

Douglas Shook, Marshall School of Business (co-chair)

Julie Tilson, Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy (co-chair)

Holly Willis, School of Cinematic Arts

Sheila Woodward, Thornton School of Music

Norah Xiao, USC Libraries

\*Ex Officio Members

The Committee on Information Services (CIS) is composed of fourteen faculty members, five ex officio members from Information Technology Services, and one ex officio member from the Information Sciences Institute. The committee met monthly during the academic year and had one joint meeting with the Strategic Technology Forum, an advisory committee to the university's chief information officer (CIO), composed of senior IT staff from the schools and units.

Agenda items discussed this year include:

1. **Faculty and Staff Use of Third-Party Email**

CIS representatives participated in meetings about the use of third-party email by faculty and staff, which were convened in May and August 2009 by Ilee Rhimes, CIO and vice provost for Information Technology Services, with senior administrators to discuss the future of USC email. In January, the CIS discussed faculty concerns about outsourced email, including the level of customer support provided by third-party vendors. The distinctions between hosted solutions and cloud solutions were addressed. Among other important differences, hosted solutions, such as Microsoft's, would allow local IT staff to have administrative access to the outsourced email system, whereas cloud solutions would not allow local IT staff administrative access to the outsourced system. There are currently no plans to discontinue the university's central email system, provided by ITS.

1. **Network Upgrade**

The CIS reviewed an ITS proposal to dedicate a portion of the FY2011 funding for the university's ongoing network upgrade project to providing pervasive wireless access across the University Park and Health Sciences campuses. The CIS recognized the importance of wireless access to the student experience and expressed unanimous support for the proposal. Pervasive wireless would also free schools from the need to purchase wireless access points for their buildings.

1. **Blackboard Upgrade**

The CIS discussed the new functionality that resulted from the upgrade to Blackboard version 9, as well as the related performance and support issues. Topics included the new capabilities of the interface and Grade Center; the new communications and assessment features; the quality of the phone support provided by Blackboard's preferred vendor, Presidium; the response time and functionality of Blackboard 9; and challenges experienced by faculty when using the Grade Center. In response to CIS concerns, the ITS Center for Scholarly Technology created new online documentation, distributed an email to faculty and students with tips for using Blackboard 9, and created an end-of-the-semester "Blackboard on Wheels" support program, through which ITS support staff visited faculty in their offices to provide one-on-one training.

1. **Password Change Procedures**

Robert Lau, director of IT security and identity management for ITS, presented regular reports on the progress of the phased rollout of the 180-day password change procedures across campus. The new procedures were implemented in the summer of 2009 to combat the problem of compromised enterprise accounts. In the coming months, ITS will integrate user-selected security questions into the password change process.

1. **Defining baseline technological resources**

The CIS-STF joint task force on academic technology created three subcommittees to examine baseline technological support related to teaching, research, and administrative computing. The subcommittees will propose guidelines to facilitate objective analysis of technological resources provided to faculty, staff, and students across the university under the federated model.

1. **Other Issues**

Other items shared with the committee included USC’s efforts to combat illegal file sharing; information about USC's participation in the Kuali Student and Kuali Financial System projects; USC wireless issues; academic and high-performance computing; the discontinuation of USC's dialup service; and plans to upgrade the university's learning environments, including multimedia classrooms and computer labs.